

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. A process for the preparation of a vanilla extract, which comprises the following steps:

- a) browning of the beans;
- b) extraction of the beans followed by treatment with an enzymatic system with cellulase and hemicellulase activities;
- c) purification of the products to a vanillin-enriched concentrate.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1, in which the browning of the beans is carried out by means of a cycle of freezing at temperatures ranging from -10 to -30°C and thawing at temperatures ranging from 2° to 8C°.

3. A process as claimed in claim 1, in which the browning of the beans is carried out by means of a cycle of scalding in water at temperatures ranging from 60° to 65°C and subsequent incubation at temperatures ranging from 15° to 45°C.

4. A process as claimed in claim 1, in which the extraction is carried out with hydroethanolic solutions of an alcoholic degree ranging from 20 to 80% v/v, at temperatures ranging from room temperature to 80°C.

5. A process as claimed in claim 4 in which the extraction is carried out with hydroethanolic solutions of an alcoholic

degree ranging from 40 to 60% v/v, at temperatures ranging from 60° to 70°C.

6. A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, in which the enzymatic treatment is carried out by contacting the extract with enzymes having cellulase activity ranging from 2000 to 6000 IU/g.

7. A process as claimed in claim 6, in which an enzyme with activity ranging from 3000 to 5000 IU/g is used.

8. A process as claimed in claim 7, in which an enzyme with cellulase activity of 4000 IU/g is used.

9. A process as claimed in claim 6 ~~any one of claims 6 to 8~~, in which the enzyme is used in concentrations ranging from 0.05 to 0.4% on the fresh bean.

10. A process as claimed in claim 6 ~~any one of claims 6 to 8~~, in which the reaction is carried out at temperatures ranging from 25°C to 50°C, for a time ranging from 20 to 72 hours.

11. A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~any one of the above claims~~, in which the purification (step b) comprises a series of treatments with water-ethanol solutions of different alcoholic degrees for the depuration of the aqueous soft extract or of a 50% v/v hydroalcoholic solution obtained by ethanol dilution of the enzymatically treated extract, operating at temperatures ranging from room temperature to 50°C.

12. A process as claimed in claim 2 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, in which the enzymatic treatment is carried out by contacting

the extract with enzymes having cellulase activity ranging from 2000 to 6000 IU/g.

13. A process as claimed in claim 3 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, in which the enzymatic treatment is carried out by contacting the extract with enzymes having cellulase activity ranging from 2000 to 6000 IU/g.

14. A process as claimed in claim 4 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, in which the enzymatic treatment is carried out by contacting the extract with enzymes having cellulase activity ranging from 2000 to 6000 IU/g.

15. A process as claimed in claim 5 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, in which the enzymatic treatment is carried out by contacting the extract with enzymes having cellulase activity ranging from 2000 to 6000 IU/g.

16. A process as claimed in claim 7 ~~any one of claims 6 to 8~~, in which the enzyme is used in concentrations ranging from 0.05 to 0.4% on the fresh bean.

17. A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claims 6 to 8~~, in which the enzyme is used in concentrations ranging from 0.05 to 0.4% on the fresh bean.

18. A process as claimed in claim 7 ~~one of claims 6 to 8~~, in which the reaction is carried out at temperatures ranging from 25°C to 50°C, for a time ranging from 20 to 72 hours.

19. A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~one of claims 6 to 8~~, in which the reaction is carried out at temperatures ranging from 25°C to 50°C, for a time ranging from 20 to 72 hours.

20. A process as claimed in claim 2, ~~any one of the above~~  
~~claims~~, in which the purification (step b) comprises a series  
of treatments with water-ethanol solutions of different  
alcoholic degrees for the depuration of the aqueous soft  
extract or of a 50% v/v hydroalcoholic solution obtained by  
ethanol dilution of the enzymatically treated extract,  
operating at temperatures ranging from room temperature to  
50°C.